N° 219 804

Truth's Progreſs;

OR,

A ſhort Relation

OF

Its Firſt Appearance and Publication After the

APOSTACY.

Wherein is ſhewed
Its Oppoſition, and its Prevalency over all the Workings of the Wicked One.

With an Epiſtolary Expoſtulation with Thoſe that love the Truth, and deſire its Proſperity in all things.

ALSO

Cautionary Adviſe to all that oppoſe it, and encourage themſelves and one another againſt it.

Written in the firſt Month, 1667.
By a Lover of Peace and Truth, JOHN CROOK.

Many alſo of them which uſed curious Arts, brought their Books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the Price of them, and found it fifty thouſand Pieces of Silver.
So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed. Act. 19, 19, 20.

Tardior ad pœnas Deus eſt, ad præmia velax.
To reward the Juſt God doth go,
But to puniſh He is more ſlow.

Printed in the year 1667.

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ERRATA.

Page 2. line 2. for *separate*, read *to separate*; page 12. line 39. for *left*, read *felt*.

Dear

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Dear Friends,

FRom the deep ſence of the great Care, Love, Mercy, and Long-ſuffering of God, which he hath exerciſed towards us all, do I at this time write unto you; deſiring the Lord ſo to direct my heart, that what is here ſignified may fully and effectually reach every Conſcience and Condition; that they may be as *words in ſeaſon* to every State, *hitting the mark*; and as *nails faſtened by the Maſter of the Aſſembly*, in every particular of you.

If Chriſt loved the young man (as it is recorded in Scripture) becauſe from his youth upward he had been towardly, affecting the beſt things, and obſervant of Gods Commands: Then in purſuance of *Chriſts* example, ought every one of us, that are his Diſciples, to pity and compaſſionate all thoſe who have been convinced by the Everlaſting Goſpel, of the way to Life and Salvation, (which ſome of them have been breathing after, ever ſince their young years) and yet now may be hindred, by Satans wiles and devices, from walking in that Way and Path of Peace and Happineſs: Some by one ſnare, and others by other ſtratagems, which the ſubtile Adverſary uſeth to beguile the Simple withal.

Indeed my Heart affects mine Eye in this matter; and I could ſay from my very Soul, *O that ſome Arrow out of the Bow of the Almighty might wound and ſlay that Enemy which hath ſtopped any in that race which once they were running in, to obtain the Crown!* What ſhall I ſay unto you, or do for you? For my Bowels yern after you, and my Spirit is grieved for you, night and day, that are hindred; that ye ſhould come ſo near the *good Land*, as not onely to *behold it afar off*, but many of you ſo near the Borders thereof, as *to taſte the fruit of it*, and yet to go back again into the Wilderneſs, amongſt the Briars and Thorns, what pity is this!

Shall ever length of time, multitude of buſineſs, encreaſe of worldly Riches, Offences, Prejudices, Snares, or Temptations, or whatever can be named, be able to blot out the ſweet remembrance of the tender Mercies of God unto your Souls, ſhewed unto you in the day of your ſore and deep diſtreſs, which I am perſwaded ma-

ny of you once felt, and were in measure acquainted withal? Shall any heighth, length, breadth, or depth, be able separate you *(that have tasted of the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come)* from the sensible, perpetual, soul-engaging feeling of that Love and Mercy so freely bestowed upon you? Or to stop your mouths from proclaiming, in the Assemblies of his People, what he hath done for you, when you were very low, even like unto dry *Bones*? O take heed, take heed, lest your continuance in evil be accounted by the pure and just God, a *despising* of the *riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering*; *not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to Repentance.*

For who can (with *Sampson*) return to view the dead Carcases of the strong Lions, which by the Grace of God they once overcame, and that but while young and green in the Truth, and not be melted in spirit, and broken as before the Lord, through the sence of the sweetness and freeness of that Love and Goodness that so fully gave them the Victory, through Faith in his Name and Vertue.

O can you remember those years of drought and famine *(not of Bread, but of hearing the Word of the Lord)* which passed over your heads, when the very *Heavens were as Brass, and the Earth as Iron*, and not be astonished, that the little black Cloud should appear in your day, which must spread until the face of the whole Heavens be covered, and all the Earth be watered thereby?

What were ye, or your Fathers house, or any of us, that when we were as the poor Shepherds that kept their flocks by night, that then *the Day-Star should appear, and arise in our hearts*, and not first manifest it self to the *Doctors* and great *Rabbies* of the time, that first from them might flow the Light of Life; but that Gods free choice in the promised Seed might appear, *to the stilling of every Enemy and Avenger*? And shall any that have been Eye-witnesses of these things in any measure, *draw back*, or be found *unthankful* to him, that found them out, and ordained strength for them, when otherwise the Devourer had at that time destroyed them?

But lest I should seem to any to be like those the Apostle speaks of, that said, *Be cloathed, fed, and warmed, but neither gave them Cloaths, Food, nor Fuel, to relieve and succour them*; I shall descend into particulars, for the clearing the Truth, for the relief and better information of all those principally concerned in this Testimony, and for the keeping my own Soul free from the *Blood of all men*: And bear with

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with me, if I use plainness, and *let no man account me his Enemy, because I tell him the Truth.*

It was the practise of the Prophets and Apostles, in their time and day, to remember the People of the *Wonders*, *Mercies* and *Deliverances* that the Lord had given to them, and to their Fathers, as may be seen by *Nehemiah*, *David*, and others, and by the *Martyr Stephen*, and the Apostle *Paul*; both of Gods dealing with them, and with their Fathers; and how the Truth grew and prospered, and who were the Enemies of it, and how the Lord upheld his Witnesses, and scattered his Adversaries: And also by what way and method those were reclaimed and reduced that had backsliden and fallen from their stedfastness, and from the Gospel-Order. As in general may be seen by the Prophets carriages and Messages to backsliding *Israel*. And in particular, *Samuel* towards *Saul*, and *Nathan* to *David*, and others also, recorded in Scripture. In like manner I finde it recorded in the New Testament, that it was the Apostles practice to restore from mistakes and irregularities, by bringing them concerned *to the beginning*, as in the case of Divorce by *Moses*, for the hardness of Peoples hearts; *But it was not so in the beginning*, as it is said. And also to rectifie mistakes, and confirm due subjection in Marriage-state, the Apostle instanceth in Gods giving *the Woman to the Man*; or that *Adam was first formed, and then Eve*; and also how *Sarah called Abraham Lord*. And likewise in the abuse of their Love-feasts, or breaking Bread, *Paul* brings them *to the beginning*, or Christs practise of it at first, saying, *In the same night he was betrayed, he took Bread*, &c. As if to bring abuses and mistakes to the first, were to see their last.

In like manner let me minde you a little of the Appearance and Publication of *Truth* again, *as in the beginning*, and of its progress unto this day: Not at large in all particulars, lest I should swell the Volumn beyond my intention; but, as in a Map, to bring the substance pertinent to the occasion to the Readers view, in as small a compass as I can, with freedom and clearness.

After the long grieved, retired, solitary state of the Church in the Wilderness, it pleased God, in his appointed time, to cause a Voice to be heard, crying, *Make straight the way of the Lord*: All flesh having corrupted their way, and their Guides being blind, there was no hope that ever People could find their Resting Place, which they had so long forgotten: Their *Physicians* being *of no worth or value*, working no perfect cure upon any of their Soul-sick-Patients, pouring

Brine instead of Oyl into their Wounds, and giving bitter Gall and Vinegar to dying men, instead of reviving Cordials; mistaking both the Disease, its seat, and way of cure: Applying Words and Promises to the Memory and Understanding Natural, as if the Malady had been in the Head, for want of Knowledge in the Brain. Whence the People, *Mephibosheth-like, were all diseased in their Feet*, not looking as they should unto their walking, *to make straight paths for their Feet*; and *the Law of God to be a Light unto their Feet, and a Lanthorn to their Paths.*

Now the Word of the *Lord* was precious in those days, for there was no open Vision. And the Voice which at first was heard in the Wilderness, crying, *Prepare the Way of the Lord*, came afterward to be heard upon *the Mount, out of the most excellent Glory*, confirming his appearance, saying, *This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.* So mighty was the Word of God, that it grew, and prospered, cutting down whatever stood in its way; the *strong Oaks* as well as the *tall Cedars*; levelling also many high Mountains *with the low Valleys*; and it was so quick and powerful, *that it discerned between the thoughts and intents of the Heart, and divided between the Flesh and Spirit, Shell and Kernell, Form and Power, painted Jezabel and the true Spouse, & between the Marrow, and the Bone that cased it:* Discovering to all men their thoughts that it met withal; making all Flesh to tremble in its progress: Whence in scorn came the Name *QUAKER*, to be given to those that came under its Power.

How it abased Self, and made it of *no reputation*, and how it made *the Cross to be endured*, and taken up dayly unto all excess and superfluities, whether in Meats or Drinks, Apparel, or Honours and Dignities below; in whatsoever they fashioned themselves to this *World* and its glory, that was not of the Father, and to *follow onely those things that made for Peace, and whatsoever was of good Report*; reforming them throughout, *in Body, Soul, and Spirit*, as well as outward, in *gestures*, and *postures*, and *language*, and *behaviour*, diverse from all People, which made them become a *gazing-stock to Men and Angels*, and to be *hated of their own Mothers Son*, and near Relations: Yet through their *taking up the Cross dayly* to those things, they *despised the shame* that came upon them from the wicked World therefore. The truth of all these things is known to them that were Eye-witnesses from the beginning.

How it made many to *burn their Books of great value* (as it was in the Apostles

Apoſtles days) and their *Pictures*, *Laces*, and other needleſs *Attires* and *Superfluities*, with which many (that the Word of Eternal Life met withal in its circuit and progreſs) were then adorned after the faſhion of this World. And how by its Authority it ſpoiled the Image and Pomp of this preſent World, inſomuch that the very *Viſage of many was ſo marred*, that they became a wonder to their former Intimates and Acquaintance; laying low all ſorts of People, *bringing down the honourable of the Earth* in that day to deny their Titles and Attendants; ſome from the Judgement-Seat, and others from their great gains in their needleſs Traffiques; making many *Valiant Men of War to put up their Swords, and become Men of Peace, and to learn War no more.*

But what ſhall I ſay of the Wiſe and Learned, and Men of all Profeſſions, Religions, and Opinions, that were gathered from all quarters of the Land, as it took them in its progreſs, and honourable Women of all perſwaſions, not a few? *Making ſome to leave their Nets, and others the receipt of Cuſtome*, to become Followers of Truth, though not to diſdain their lawful Callings, but to return to them again, as *Paul* did to his *Tent-making*, and others to their Nets, upon occaſion, as an antient Father once ſaid: But we never read (ſaid he) *that thoſe who were called from the Receipt of Cuſtom, returned thither any more:* Obſerving thence, That ſome Callings once laid down, ought never to be taken up again.

What unwearied pains the Truth made many to take, to run to and fro, to inform and fore-warn their Relations and Acquaintance, leſt they ſhould *neglect the day of their Viſitation*, and they knowing the Truth, ſhould become guilty of their Blood, becauſe they had not fore-warned them, is known to many Witneſſes. And alſo how many, like *David's Worthies*, brake through an Hoſt and Camp of dangers, to bring the Water of Life to the thirſty Souls, and what *blows and bruiſes, Impriſonments* and *Sufferings they met withall in their paſſages*, there was ſcarce in that day ſuch a ſtranger in *Iſrael*, but knew it right well. And will it not be charged by the Lord that ſent them, as *great ingratitude in thoſe that received of their Water, but now have forgotten it, ſo as evilly to requite them for their good?*

How tender were the hearts of thoſe made in that day, which received the *Word of life*? And what was too dear for them to part withal, for the advancement of Truth, and its Teſtimony? Nay, what Zeal? what care to preſerve thoſe then begotten, leſt they ſhould be turned

aside by the Enemy? If but an evil report was occasioned through any indiscretion, what pains was taken to stop it? Or if any *nakedness appeared in any*, what *love and pity was used to cover it*, lest the World should know it, and blaspheme the pure pure Name of God thereby, and the person perish in the snare of the Devil, for want of a little Balm and restoring Medicine? I need not mention (except to provoke those that are in a declension in these things) the love that abounded, & the delight that the Sheep of Gods Pasture took, in being often together, their *Hearts cleaving to each other, like the Soul of Jonathan and David*; many hours seeming but a short time, and often meeting together, although through great hardships and difficulties, appeared as nothing, in comparison of the great Joy and Comfort they found in coming together to meet with the Lord, *and to feel the glory of his presence amongst them*.

All which is known, and much more, unto those that were Eye and Heart-Witnesses from the beginning. Let me minde you also of the great care and circumspection that every sound Heart had at that day, *of Whispering, or Back-biting any*, or of letting in any hard or prejudicial thoughts or jealousies, concerning any that were in the least measure in the Truth, but much more touching the least of those that had the *Message of glad Tidings to deliver from the great God*, whose care was to approve themselves in all things, lest the Gospel should be blamed, either through Life or Doctrine. And how *few and savory the words of all convinced were*, that had *their hearts seasoned with the Grace of God*, to the edification of all that conversed with them, being watchful lest their hearts should be sown with mingled Seed, or that they should *mix spirits with the World*; being principally careful that *their hearts might not be over-charged with the cares of this Life*; Not at all affecting great things for themselves, nor to get a Name in the Earth, but to stand approved in Gods sight, which they valued beyond the Judgement of the Wise and of the Honourable in the Earth, or of any of the Sons of Men, is also fully known to them that were converted in the beginning.

What the Testimony it self was in the beginning, as to Doctrine and good Manners, I need not mention in particular, because it is *also known and testified unto by many Witnesses, as it was in the beginning*: As also its form and dress in which it first appeared upon the stage of this World; Only let me remember you of its disguised habit, that none of the worldly wise could know it, or receive it in reality.

How

How did it anatomize and diſſect men in their inward parts, whereby they came to ſee and underſtand the myſtery of Iniquity in all its workings, lineaments, and dependencies, with the *Man of Sin, his Seat, and Government in them, above all that is called God*; and how he *was worſhipped as God*; which was the cauſe why thoſe who thus learned of Chriſt, appeared ſo rough and ſharp againſt Hypocriſie in all Profeſſions, of what Form or Opinion ſoever they were, from a true certain ſight and knowledge that they had of the States and Conditions of all people in their ſeveral Wayes and Worſhips, diſcerning the inſides of others, by the true experimental knowledge they had of themſelves; from whence, as truely learned, and like *Skilful Phyſitians*, they came to *underſtand* both the *Diſeaſes* and *Cauſe of them*, and alſo the *right way of Cure for them*; and durſt not *daub with untempered mortar*, as the unskilful Builders had done before them, nor *heal the ſeveral Hurts and Diſeaſes of People ſlightly*, but firſt *removed the Cauſe*, and then the Effect *ceaſed*. And thus the Lord bleſſed the Truth, and proſpered it from the beginning, in the hearts and hands of thoſe who continued faithful Witneſſes of it, and to it; As it was in the beginning, bleſſed be his holy Name for ever. *Amen.*

But the way of Cure being ſo ſharp and terrible to all fleſh, many that aſſented to the skill of the *Phyſitians*, and were convinced of the Truth; after they had taſted a little of Judgement, as the *ſharp Medicine* to eat through all the deadneſs and darkneſs *within them*, all the paſſages of Life being dammed up, and the Power working ſtrongly to remove all thoſe Obſtructions; *many eſcaped* and *fled the Judgement*, not being able to indure the mightineſs of its Operation, and therefore never came through the work of *Regeneration*, but got looſe after a deadly Wound, and ſo became onely formal for a time; and ſuch, although they might come out with us in the beginning, yet went away, *ſome to the Earth*, others to their *old Courſes*, according to the Proverb, having opportunity of returning, *they returned again with the Dog to his Vomit*; which manifeſts they did not ſtand by Faith, nor were born of the Immortal Seed.

Theſe, like the Star *John* ſpeaks of in the *Revelations, fell from Heaven to the Earth*, and then became *chief Factors for the evil One*, being intruſted *with the Keys of the bottomleſs Pit*, and had power to hurt all but the *green thing*, (for the time ſuffered, which will not be long) beyond thoſe that never attained to a ſtate higher then the Earth, and *ſuch Revolters are profound to make ſlaughter*. And are

like

like unto *Gehazie* coveting after those things, which that Master refused, whom they *pretended to serve*. But they have been, and shall be also requited with like Plague and Punishment, *for the Leprosie of* Nahaman *came upon* Gehazie. Let him read that can understand.

Now Friends, it is in my heart (as God shall inable me) somewhat to let you understand the cunning workings of the Enemy, in opposition to the Truth, and to betray the simple: to this end, that they who have been beguiled by him, may be delivered out of his snare; and others prevented by their Example, that the Truth may prevail in and over all.

The contests about Religion hitherto, have not been so much about the tryal of Spirits, as between Opinion and Opinion, and between Interpretation and Interpretation of holy Scripture. And yet it hath been the complaint of all sides, that they have not had fair dealings from the adverse party, especially from those that have had the Sword, and outward power on their side; because like the *Jews against* Stephen, *when Arguments have been wanting, they have presently run to the heap of stones*; and like dealings the Innocent have met withal in this Age. Whenas in Religious Matters men ought to be conquered or silenced; as the Stars in brightness do exceed each other, and the Darkness also, and the Moon them all; and as the Sun doth both the Moon and Stars, by a Transcendent and out-shining Glory, which rather naturally swalloweth them up, or comprehends them, then forceth them, as the vast Ocean doth the little Brooks and land-Rivers, or according to Scripture Phrase, as *mortality is swallowed up of Life*; and in this sence ought every lesser measure to be subject to the greater, and so it is not hurt by, but blessed of the greater, as it is written, *The lesser is blessed of the greater*. And not as Beasts do each other by force and mastership, as it is written, *Man being in honour abideth not, but becometh like the Beast that perisheth*; and what the Master Beasts carriage is to all the rest, experience sheweth. For Christ *gently leads*, but *not forcibly drives* his Lambs into the Fold of Rest.

But now as the contest comes closer between Spirit and Spirit, it must needs be hotter, because the Relation is nearer; and differences between near Relations (if one side doth not bear) are more disquieting then between Neighbours, and worse between Neighbours then Strangers; for now the Enemy (as it were) hath all at stake at once, *knowing his time is but short*, and *therefore rageth the more*; and the

Battel

Battel must needs be sharp, because he is cast out of many already, (blessed be the Lord) and must be cast out of more daily; because that *Everlasting Gospel is Preached again*, and must be *to all Nations*, for a sign of his Destruction, but their Recovery and Salvation; that *as Sin hath reigned unto Death and Darkness*, so *Righteousness might reign to Light and Life*, until *the knowledge of the Lord cover the Earth*, as blindness and ignorance hath done, and *as the Waters cover the Sea*.

So that now the great business is for every one convinced of Gods everlasting Truth, *to examine themselves with the Light of Jesus Christ*, that they may know *what Spirit they are of*, and not to conclude they are all born of that right Spirit, because they once were in measure guided by it, or because they have it at present convincing of them, or striving with them, to gain obedience from them in all things unto it self; and therefore to father all Actions and Motions upon it, as the Author of them; is not onely an hainous offence against God, but also dangerously hazardous to that Soul which so presumes.

Therefore I shall in short speak something concerning the pure holy sanctifying Spirit of God, that every one may understand what Spirit they are of, as the Apostle did in order to the recovery of those which were drawn aside amongst the *Galathians*, bringing them to the beginning, saying, *Ye began well, ye began in the Spirit*; and also minding them of the Fruits of it, which while they abode in it they knew; And also the fruits of the Flesh, which also they might know to abound in them so soon as ever they had departed from the Spirit; and doubtless he instances in such particular fruits of the Spirit, as most abound in those who abide in it, toward those which have departed from it, as the most effectual means to reclaim them; and on the contrary the like may be said of the particular fruits of the Flesh which he instanceth in, else he spake but in general, and so answered not the particular occasion, as most proper to obtain his Travel, which was their recovery; the particular Fruits of the Spirit he instanceth in, are *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance, against such there is no Law*.

Now the contrary to these must needs proceed from the Flesh, otherwise they could not try themselves according to his advice. In like manner do I exhort all *to come to the Light and Spirit of Christ within them*, to shew unto them their miscarriages, and whether they hold the Truth as it was in the beginning; for *envy, strife, bitterness, fierceness, wrath, watching for evil, despising of those that are good, and such*

as are imployed by the Lord to feed his Lambs, and to Preach the everlasting Gospel freely, as they have freely received it; or to lay stumbling-blocks in the way of the weak; or to cause the way of Truth to be evil spoken of, because of the miscarriages of some; These and the like (doubtless) are Evils that the Lord will not suffer to go unpunished, and are for Judgement, and must be repented of by all that are guilty of them.

Again, let none that are guilty think to *wipe their mouths*, and say, *These things concern not me*; wel, to the witness in thee thou art brought, from whence there is no appeal; for *if that condemn thee, God is greater*. I am now in all faithfulness indeavouring thy recovery, and if I may speak it without offence, I could even desire that my Breast were as a Window that every one might see through me and within me, whether my Heart and Soul desireth or seeketh any thing else besides *the advancement of Truth, and the liberty of every Captive*, that in any measure breatheth after the living God; for I am sure there is a Seed that would serve the Lord, did not a hard heart *hinder it within*, as *Pharaoh* did without.

Let me in honesty of heart reason with you a little: What can you charge against this Elect Seed? *Who hath it wronged? And whose Name hath it defamed? Or whom hath it betrayed? Or whose Gold, or Silver, or Apparel, hath it coveted? Or what good Order hath it broken? Or did it ever put any upon the forsaking the Assemblies of the Saints? Either for fear of suffering, or out of sullenness of mind, because of prejudice against the Persons of any; or out of slighting, contemptuous thoughts, either of those that meet, or of the Worship and Service which they perform?* Nay, Is it not the *hasty peevish spirit* that concludes *all men are lyars*? because some are so that profess the Truth; and therefore slights all in the mind, how fair soever they may seem to be to any outwardly. Take heed of it, for indeed the Enemy works secretly to thy hurt, while thou letst in such thoughts and reasonings; and I am sure these things are not with the consent and liking of the pure Seed of Life, but to the grief of it, couldst thou understand its Voice, which at present is stopped from thy hearing by the multitude of thy *Thoughts, Prejudices, Consultations*, and *Conclusions*, all which make thee confident in thy self, that thou dost well in what thou dost; like *Jonah*, who replyed to God, *He did well to be angry, even to Death*.

Oh remember, that when once the Light is put out, and Darkness takes its place, *How great is* [that] *Darkness?* As Christ said to the

Jews,

Jews. I have a travel in my Spirit at this time for thee, the Lord is my Witneſs, I lie not. Oh what ſhall I do for the poor oppreſſed Innocent Seed, that lies under the duſt of fleſhly Rubbiſh, as in a Grave covered with Earth in thee? Shall I ſay to thee in the Fear and Name of my God, *Ariſe, and come forth; for why wilt thou die? ariſe, and ſhine, for thy Light is come,* which doth make manifeſt thy ſtate; and all the Mountains ſhall melt before thee, and all Clouds ſhall be ſcattered, and brightneſs appear in the face of the whole Heavens; and *inſtead of cruel bondage, that Soul in whom Life ariſeth, ſhall injoy a glorious Liberty*; and *for grief and heavineſs, the Oyl of Joy and Gladneſs*; and *for mourning and ſorrow, the beautiful Garments of Praiſe* and *Thankſgiving: for where the Spirit of the Lord is in Rule and Authority, there is Liberty; and the Lord is that Spirit which ſets free the Soul from Death*, by breaking the Bands thereof, and ſnapping the Chains in ſunder. All thy ſtraitneſs is in thy own Bowels, by letting in *Thoughts, Evils, Jealouſies,* and *Surmiſings,* &c. But thou wilt be inlarged through thy accepting of Judgement upon all theſe things, and whatever elſe is contrary to the Holy God; for I am to Preach the *everlaſting Goſpel* to thee this day, that thou mayeſt *ariſe that ſitteſt in the Duſt, and ſhew thy ſelf forth, and awake to Righteouſneſs thou that ſleepeſt, and ſtand up from the Dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light and Life*; for Chriſt Jeſus the Son of Man is this day held forth and *lifted up* unto thee, that thou mayeſt ſee him and be ſaved by him, *as the Serpent was lift up in the Wilderneſs* to cure all the hurts thou received in the Wilderneſs, and to *heal thy back-ſlidings, and love thee freely*, if yet thou wilt *hearken diligently that thy Soul may live*; and look up in the Light to him over all thy thoughts, miſcarriages, and fears, and *ſin no more leſt a worſe thing come upon thee:* and for the time to come, *owe nothing unto any man but love*; and *when thou art converted, thou wilt ſtrengthen thy Brethren*, as before thou didſt *weaken them* by thy evil Example and Converſation, inventing of that which will now be thy ſhame, as in the converted Eſtate thou abideſt and continueſt.

I long and travel in my Spirit to ſee the day wherein many that have been beguiled (like *Sampſon*) through the cunning craftineſs of the wicked One, ſhall be reſtored again; for why may not the *long-grieved reſiſted Spirit of Grace*, yet ſo ſtrive again, as to give them victory over all that hath captivated; like the Hair of *Sampſon* that was ſhaven, but grew again, whereby his ſtrength returned, that *he*

ſtew more through his death then he did by his Life. Surely thoſe that delight to dwell inwardly in cloſe Fellowſhip and Communion with God, are ſenſible of the many wiles and devices which the Enemy uſeth to draw out their minds to give heed to thoſe vanities which he on purpoſe ſuggeſteth to make them forſake their own mercies, tendred freely to them in the Light of Jeſus.

What Bait more likely to take than the reſemblance of that which the right Innocent Spirit loveth? As may be ſeen in the Serpents beguiling *Eve* from the ſimplicity of Chriſt, the expreſs Likeneſs and Image of God, under a pretence of bringing her more into it, as it is written, *And ye ſhall be as God*, or like unto God, *knowing good and evil*, which the Apoſtle calls, a *beguiling through his ſubtilty*. It is good abiding with God in the ſtate whereunto Man is called by God, and not to remove, until he is ſure the advance and remove is by the ſame God.

My love to the Seed in all, and readineſs to lend thoſe my hand that were fallen, hath procured like judgement from ſome, as the *Jews* gave againſt Chriſt; becauſe he kept company, and eat and drank ſometimes with *Publicans* and Sinners, to ſeek the loſt amongſt them; but the *Jews* ſeeing his readineſs to Mercy, tryed him whether he would do Juſtice at all in any caſe, by bringing to him the Woman taken in the Act of Uncleanneſs; which thing all thought it proceeded from an evil intent in the *Jews*, yet it proved an occaſion to him to manifeſt both Mercy and Juſtice: Mercy upon the Woman, and Juſtice upon her Accuſers, as being faulty Perſons themſelves, and therefore not competent and true Witneſſes to be taken in the due and right adminiſtration of Juſtice; which Method Chriſt ſtill obſerveth to meet with forward and malicious Proſecutors.

I have longed for an opportunity a little to expreſs my Spirit and Soul in this Matter. I have been a Man (like *Heman*) afflicted from my Youth up, and few but the Lord hath been acquainted with my exerciſes inwardly, though outwardly alſo I have had my ſhare; and indeed having had much *forgiven me*, and much Love and Mercy ſhewed to me, I cannot but be like minded as I am kept to the Seed of Life in my ſelf, for the ſake of which I have been upheld in and over all, and what I have felt and ſeen the Father do to me when *I* have at any time in any thing miſcarried, that do I, or at leaſt ought alwayes, and in all things and like caſes to do to others; and when I have not done ſo, I have left the Lord rebuking me for it.

I acknowledge from my heart, That in cases wherein I agree, both concerning the Disease, and the danger of it, with others; yet in the way of Cure, I may somewhat vary: especially if I have laboured under the same Temptation my self, and remembring what way I was restored or helped: Some by Corrosives and sharp Medicines, where the case is desperate, may be recovered, and some others also may be lost and slain, which by a skilful hand, through the use of Lenitives or Cordials, might have been preserved. And if Experience may give her vote, I judge she will direct to Love and Pity, as the most excellent way in the first place, and in ordinary cases. But wherein I have miscarried in being too mild, and offended any, I hope they will forgive me that wrong, as they expect to be forgiven, who have at any time miscarried on the other hand.

But if any, on the one hand, have taken incouragement either from my speaking or writing, to strengthen themselves in evil Practices, contrary to the Truth, as it was in the beginning received and held forth from the Light and Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ: I declare in the holy Name of my God, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son, that I never intended any such incouragement, but always intended and endeavoured Peace and Union; and whatever might proceed at any time, either from my Pen or Tongue, was onely to heal and make up Breaches, where any was already made, and never in the least either to make new ones, or the old ones wider. *And whoever they are that have wrested my Words or Writings to suit their humours and evil intentions, to hinder the prosperity of Truth, and to make discord among Brethren, whether in this Isle, or the Isles beyond the Seas, they have wronged my words, and the naked intentions of my heart, and will bring upon themselves misery and destruction, if they continue therein*; which I desire may be prevented by the Spirit of Jesus, making them sensible of the dangers therein, and to *bear the indignation of the Lord, because they have sinned against him*, unto a thorow change and Reformation in them for the time to come: And I can and do freely forgive the wrong done unto my particular.

On the other hand, if any *have conceived Jealousies in their mindes, and watched for occasion against the Innocent, and grounding a false Judgment upon those mis-apprehensions, and then send it abroad as a certain thing, on purpose to bespatter the guiltless; such shall bear their Judgement, whoever they be.*

I have often in secret considered what reason there should be for

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some Mens Jealousies, and *I* could find none more probable then that of *Saul*'s against *David*, viz. Because of the [*Voices of others*] with this note upon it, *viz. And Saul eyed David from that day forward.* But whether any thing of like nature or resemblance hath ever been in my heart (much less endeavoured by me) concerning the least Labourer in my Fathers Vineyard, is known to the Lord.

And *I* appeal to all you that have known me in Bonds and at liberty, amongst whom *I* have laboured and been conversant these twelve years and upwards, who have known my Doctrine and manner of Life, whether *I* have sought my self, or any thing from you to inrich my self, but have gone a warfare *at my own charge*; and whether *I* have *handled the Word deceitfully*, but endeavoured always *to stand approved in Gods presence, and to be manifest to your Consciences in his sight?* And whether *I* have used *lightness* among you, *to stir up the vain mind to unprofitable discourses?* Or whether at any time *I suggested jealousies amongst you* concerning any of the Lords People? Or to beget *a low esteem in your minds of those that labour in the Word & Doctrine of Jesus*; or whether *I* have sought *to get entertainment in your affections.* Nay, had it been the will of God, *I* could have desired often, that my Message might have been delivered, and my Face and Person have been unknown: As *I* have often said, so again *I* do declare that those who keep in the feeling Love of God, and honour and respect his Spirit in themselves, let such so kept (if they can) *dis-respect the Ministers of Life and Peace.* Bear with me, if *I* use plainness in this matter, for it is for no other end but to answer the good in all, *and that the Gospel might have a free passage in all hearts and Consciences*, where-ever it is published, either through this Vessel, or any other whom the Lord shall use; *and that an open door may be ministred through all the Churches of Christ, for the Word of Eternal Life to enter into them, from henceforth and for ever.*

I labour and am pained in Spirit, until all *Bands be broken*, and all the Hearts and Minds of those convinced *be opened and prepared as a Bride for her Husband*, that none may be found *foolish Virgins*, contenting themselves with the words and talk of Truth, *like Oyl in the Lamp onely*, which will go out and be consumed, if the Seed of Truth within be not dayly fed, *as Oyl in the Vessels*, to keep your *Lamps burning*, and your *Lights shining*, that men may see your good Works, and glorifie the God of your Salvation.

I beseech you, Friends and Brethren, to *suffer the word of Exhorta-*

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now to prevail with you, unto a thorow Examination of your own Hearts, with the *Light of the Gospel of Jesus*, whether you have kept to the Truth, as declared and practised *in the beginning*; or you have suffered loss in your inward man, and find decays of Love to God, and of Zeal for his Truth upon Earth. I know right-well that *a good condition may be easily lost, but hardly recovered:* Examine thy self whether thou delightest thy self now as much as at first thou didst in *Communion with God and his People:* Are the Assemblies of his Children as dear to thee as ever they were? If not, seek out the cause, and let no pretence blind thy minde from a diligent attending thereupon, but keep to the Seed in thy self, *which thinketh no ill*, much less doth any, and in that thou wilt feel the benefit of Communion with Gods People, and wilt be bound up together with them, as in the bundle of Life; and a bundle is not easily broken and shatter'd, as particulars apart are: Search whether thou hast kept thy *Garments clean from being defiled with the spirit of this World, building again in thy self that which once thou destroyed in others: If Riches increase, set not thy heart on them*, which they will easily get, if thou be not watchful and diligent in keeping thy heart and mind close unto the Lord, and his Truth in the inward parts: *For the love of Money is the Root of all evil* (as it is written.)

Take often a view of the Truth, as it was in the beginning, and what effect and operation it had upon thee, when thou wast first convinced; how *low*, how *meek*, how *poor in Spirit*, and *humble in heart and minde?* making thee to esteem *every one better then thy self*, seeing and knowing more evil in thy self, and in that nature by which thou wast a Child of wrath, then in all the World beside (as in thy Eye at that day) and surely experience sheweth unto the Watchful, that that nature is the same, and will be bringing forth the same Fruits again, if it be not mastered and ruled over by the Pure and Divine; which made the Apostle say after his Conversion, *That in him*, that is to say, *in his Flesh, was no good thing*: Which quickened state made the poor Disciples cry out as guilty Persons, though clear from the act, *Master is it I? Is it I?* Whilst feared *Judas* takes no notice of a particular intimation given him by Christ concerning himself, who told him plainly, *He that dipped his Finger with him in the dish should betray him*, of which his hard heart took no notice. Again, Art thou as careful to *keep the Truth without blame, as at the beginning; and as ready to restore the fallen, and to cover the nakedness of thy Brother*, as at first?

first? *Is no Whispering, evil Speaking, and Backbiting, and watching with an evil eye, and searching after weaknesses and halings in some, accounting them great and hainous miscarriages, being glad of them, to defame those whom thou hast a mind to defame; and taking no notice of great miscarriages in others whom thou respectest, and wouldst have well thought of?* Durst thou do thus in the beginning, when thou wast first convinced, and the lively quickning Spirit ruled in thee, keeping thy spiritual senses always exercised, *to discern between Good and Evil*? Thus let every one try themselves with the measure of Truth, that they may see whether they have kept to it as it was in the beginning.

But you that have kept your Habitations with God, and close unto the Truth, as it was in the beginning; Bless the Lord for his Goodness unto you: for if he had not kept you, you had run out, and miscarried as well as others; *for you do not bear the Root, but the Root you.* And how know you, but you have been spared for such a time as this, like Queen *Esther*, to attend the Kings presence, that you may be instruments to divert the Evil Purposes of the Enemy of the Holy Seed; and that many, fallen into their snares and temptations, by the spirit of meekness in you (who stand by faith) might be restored, to the making of you shine more gloriously *in the firmament of Gods power, through the converting of many from the evil of their way*: And blessed shall you be of the Lord, who are found diligent in this Work. For this is my Testimony for the Lord this day, *That another Gospel shall never be preached to gather Men and Women to God*, for it is *the everlasting Gospel*; and those which know it to be the *Gospel of their Salvation*, can say that there is more then a bare Opinion or *different Judgement* between them and others that do not believe in the Light within, that *lighteth every man that cometh into the World*, to be sufficient to lead to God, through Christ, from whom it comes; and it is possible for one that once knew the Truth in measure, and after departed from it, to think as *slightly of the Truth, as those that never knew it*. It was not *Dives* but *Lazarus*, in the Parable, that had passed through the Gulf, that knew the difficulty of the passage into *Abrahams* Bosome, while *Dives* thought the way passable at pleasure. This Gospel must more and more spread and shine in its Glory and Beauty, until the Man of Sin be fully discovered in all minds and hearts, that *the Kingdoms of this World may become the Lords and his Christs.*

Whatever hath fallen out, or shall yet be suffered to come to pass to obstruct and hinder the work of this Gospel, shall in the conclusion be

be ordered of God to work together for its advancement, as if ſuch things had never been: For *thoſe Flames of Fire which are and ſhall be rendred upon thoſe that obey not the Goſpel*, ſhall make thoſe that are *ſanctified through obedience thereunto*, the more glorifie God: And the periſhing of others through Unbelief, ſhall make thoſe that are ſaved through Faith, the more to *admire the Riches of Gods Love and Mercy unto them.*

Therefore *ariſe thou that ſitteſt in the Duſt, and ſing forth the high Praiſes of God, and come forth of the Pit, and out of the Priſon-houſe, and ſhew thy ſelf forth, for the day of Gods Mercy is come, even the ſet time to pity Zion that mourned in the Duſt, becauſe God had forſaken her.* And thou *that ſhakeſt thy ſelf like a man of War, and rejoyceſt like a Giant to run his race*; notwithſtanding the ſtorms and winds, clouds and miſts that may ſeem to interpoſe, *thou ſhalt yet ſing in the heights of Zion*; and for thy ſake am *I* ſtirred in ſpirit, that all *bonds may be broken, and all weights and burthens laid aſide, and the yoke of Chriſt put on every neck*, that with one Shoulder we may all draw in the work of the Lord, until the *fallow ground of Peoples Hearts* (whereon groweth the Bryars and Thorns) *be plowed up*, that the Seed of the Kingdom may ſprout and grow in them alſo, until *the Nations became like the Garden of Eden, and the Mountain of the Houſe of the Lord be on the top of all Mountains, that the Nations of them that are ſaved may flow unto it for ever.* Amen.

Now *I* have a few words unto you Sons and Daughters of Men, into whoſe hands this Teſtimony may come, of what Judgement or Perſwaſion ſo ever you are; and it is, by way of Advice, to take heed that you harden not your hearts againſt the Truth, becauſe of any miſcarriages in thoſe that do profeſs it: It is no new thing for a *Judas to betray his Maſter*, and a *Demas to embrace this preſent World*, nor for *all Aſia to turn aſide for a time.* Remember thou art doing the ſame thing daily (and know'it it not) in thy heart & ſpirit, againſt the ſtrivings of Gods good Spirit in thy own Boſome: Remember that *Sarah*'s laughing at the Angels Meſſage, was rebuked by the Angel; and *Hagar* was caſt out with her Son for his offence, who mocked *Iſaac* after he was born, which by the Apoſtle is called PERSECUTION; ſaying, *As he that was born after the Fleſh* (referring to *Iſhmael*) *perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit*, (referring to *Iſaac*) *ſo it is now.* I know many Profeſſors, and others, are as big with expectation concerning the downfal of the *Quakers*

(ſo called) and the Truth which they profeſs, as *Rebecka* was with her Twins; and as ignorant of the *Quakers* bottom and foundation, as ſhe was of the meaning of their ſtriving in her Womb, until ſhe enquired of the Lord, as it is written. Therefore take heed of ſpeaking evil of things ye know not, leſt you render your ſelves more like Beaſts then Men, in ſo doing. Say not, as thoſe Mockers did, *Where is the Promiſe of his coming?* Where is that Perfection you ſpeak of, and that Union you glory in? *&c.* leſt your *bands become ſtrong.*

The Doctrine of Perfection doth ſtand, and ſhall ſtand for ever, which the *Quakers* aſſerted; for they never aſſigned any particular man unto the World, as lodging it there; but *Chriſt the promiſed Seed*, and thoſe that abide in him: and ſuch the Scripture ſaith *ſinneth not*, becauſe *in Him is no ſin.* The *Quakers* aſſerted *Perfection attainable through Gods Grace*, and that every Chriſtian ought ſo to believe, in deſpite of the Devils Enmity; which Prieſts and Profeſſors oppoſed: And this was the queſtion between us and them, and not whether this or that particular man hath attained it. And ſo it ſtands firm and ſafe, notwithſtanding what the evil Eye doth or can ſpy out againſt it.

For the Union we ſpeak of with God, and one with another, we never placed it in the Name or outward Form only, but in *the Light of Chriſt*; not talked of, but walked in: But if any convinced of the Light of Chriſt, ſay they have *fellowſhip with us in him, and yet walk in darkneſs, they lie, and do not the Truth*: for no lie is of the Truth, and their practice is a ſufficient evidence to convict them without any farther tryal: for, according to Chriſts Doctrine, the remaining of ſin is a ſufficient conviction of Blindneſs, as he ſaid to the Jews, *Becauſe you ſay you ſee, therefore your ſin remains, &c.* but all *that do walk in the Light, as he is in the Light, have fellowſhip one with another.* We never aſſerted, that all convinced muſt needs be converted, nor that all converted muſt needs always keep in that ſtate, and could never depart from it; but that every ones ſafety was in keeping to the Grace, whereby they ſhould know how the Grace kept them, as it is written, *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments*; and it is but our reaſonable ſervice that we ſhould do as much for God as we have done for the Devil; as it is written, *Rom.* 6. 19. *As ye have yeilded your Members ſervants to unrighteouſneſs, even ſo yield your Members ſervants to righteouſneſs, &c.*

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How this hath been done unto the motions of Luſt within, may eaſily be known; even ſo may the motions of the good Spirit within, be known and yeilded unto, which is but moſt juſt and equal. So that the Union with God, and one with another, in the Light of Jeſus Chriſt, amongſt all that abide and walk in it, ſtands as firm as ever it did, between the faithful and watchful in ſpirit: For we never held out a Fellowſhip and Communion between *Light and Darkneſs*, nor *between Good and Evil*; but *in the Good onely*. Therefore your hopes and expectations ſhall be *abortives*, and your *eyes* ſhall *fail in your holes*, who look to ſee your *deſires accompliſhed* upon the *Truth*, and *Children* of it. Therefore as you love your own Souls, ceaſe ſuch *thoughts* and *expectations*; for you will but *harden your hearts* the more thereby, and be *diſappointed at laſt*: But bow *your necks* unto the *yoke of Chriſt*, which will convey you to the *true Reſt* for your *Souls*, and ſhew unto you (as in the *Light you believe*) the end of all your *obſervations*, and *carnal ordinances*, and *beggarly elements*, to the *rending the Vail off your Hearts*, which will remain and continue until *Chriſt* be witneſſed, the ſum and ſubſtance of all things to you, and in you, through the application of *his holy Spirit*, and not through any imagination or traditional credulity in your ſelves.

A *few Words* to you *little Children*, that are ready to be *troubled in your minds*, becauſe of the *proſperity* of the *Wicked*, and *your own tryals increaſing upon you*, and it may be ſuch as you never expected to meet withal; ſaying within your ſelves, *Have I forſaken all that is near and dear to me in this World to embrace the Truth? And have I left all other Societies and Fellowſhips, to come into the Fellowſhip of Truth, expecting I ſhould never have found thoſe profeſſing the ſame Truth with me, and ſuch as were convinced before me, to differ among themſelves: or that ever ſuch Fruits ſhould have been brought forth by any that profeſs the Truth?* Nay, ſaith ſome weak one, *I would have thought hardly of ſuch in the time of my profeſſion, as not fit for the Fellowſhip I then was in.* I know the *Enemy* tempts thee ſore, ſometimes by raiſing *doubts in thy mind*, whether it be *Truth* or no, which thou haſt *received*, and *ſuffered* for; but after a little combating with him about this, thou ſhakeſt him off, as that *Lyar* which from the beginning thou waſt troubled with: But then he comes upon thee afreſh with *a new aſſault*, to *juſtifie this man*, and *to condemn the other*; and to take part with this thing, and to condemn the other; which doth ſo bewilder thy mind, and darken thy underſtanding, that thou art at a ſtand what to do, *ſometimes liking*, and *ſometimes diſliking* this and the other thing; the *Enemy* ſuggeſting to thee, that thou hadſt better never

received.

received the *Truth*: *And thou seest* (saith the *Enemy* within) *what thou hast gotten through all thy hardships and sufferings, more trouble, vexation, and disquietments of spirit then ever thou knewst before*: Thou resolving at sometimes to sit still, and to meddle no more, and never to come to Meetings with Gods People again, but to pass away thy time with as little trouble to thee as thou canst, thinking sometimes to take this course, and sometimes the other, to get ease to thy mind, or else to mourn away thy days in sorrow.

I have this to say to thee, thou poor Soul, *Keep thy own Habitation with God, in the measure of his Grace committed to thee, and meddle not with other mens matters, neither those that are given to change; but shut out all that would interrupt thy communion with God, and with his People, that keep their minds out of strife, and that follow those things which are of good report, and which make for peace; these things follow, and keep in love with all those that love the Truth, and are tender of it, and seek its advancement above all; who have no end to self, nor to this World, nor the things of it; but unto Purity and Holiness, and a close walking with God in Spirit; and thy temptations will wear away, and those broken Bones shall be set again unto a firmer union with God, and his Truth and People, then ever thou wast in before: and then the broken Bones shall rejoyce, and thou conclude, that in faithfulness God hath suffered thee to be tryed, that thou mayst learn obedience by all thou hast suffered, and also to understand that it was to make thee abhor thy self more then ever thou couldst have done, had not these things befallen thee; that with* Job *thou mayst attain to a knowledge of God beyond the hearing of the Ear; which will reward thee double for all thy sufferings and trials, and make thee keep close unto the Lord, and to the fellowship of Saints for ever, that through thy experiences many Wanderers may be converted to God, & thy self established in his blessed Truth for ever, & become a Pillar in Gods house, and go no more forth, but be found to the praise of the riches of the glory of his grace, whose mercies* (wilt thou say) *endure for ever.*

Thus having *finished* my *Testimony* at this time, in faithfulness to God, and his requirings, in what plainness he was pleas'd to bring things to my remembrance, desiring to answer the least good in all hearts & consciences; but not to regard the evil will of any, nor to please the minds of the unstable multitude, whether *Professors*, or *Profane*, knowing the one sort (like the *Jews*) will cry *Hosanna* to day, and *crucifie him* to morrow; and the other, like the *Barbarians*, who sometime concluded the Apostle a Murderer, and presently changed their mind, and said he was a God: For I am more a free man then to sacrifice my just Liberty to any mans humour; And more a Christian then to ask any man leave to perform my duty to God, or to *hold the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to no sons*; but in Christ alone the Author of it, who is God over all, blessed for ever. AMEN.

THE END.